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Intelligence
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IC 74-2123
12 November 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: An Overview of the East European Scene

REFERENCE: OPR Informal Memorandum Re Subject

1. On 7 November OPR hosted several East Europe and USSR watchers from this building, [redacted] to address the attached talking paper. The authors, [redacted] said they intended to provoke discussion rather than offer a definitive assessment. It is a testimony to the turbulence of East European history, as well as to the [redacted] drafting skills, that people can be provoked by the message that "equilibrium has emerged" (paragraph 1). Indeed the NIO for USSR/EE considered the message important enough to justify sending the paper in its present form to the NSC Staff.

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2. There is no point in attempting to summarize the authors' concise treatment of such a broad topic, nor in repeating their amplifying remarks on the main points. The discussion lasting two hours produced no overall consensus but at least clarified some differences of opinion.

3. On the economic portions of the paper (paragraphs 6-11), Bill [redacted] of OPR, for one, challenged the thesis that integration within CEMA had become "depoliticized." He thought it likely the East European regimes would continue to resist Soviet demands that their economic plans be synchronized with the Soviets'. Others questioned whether the Soviets would meekly tolerate a situation otherwise encouraging "East and West Europeans to look to joint cooperation in solving their mutual fuel problems" (paragraph 10). And what would happen if in response to higher Soviet prices for oil the East Europeans sought to raise the prices on goods they sell to the USSR, or turned to China for oil? No one had clear answers to such questions.

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4. With regard to the political paragraphs, [redacted] of OCI suggested that in view of the Cominformist plot in Yugoslavia it made sense to assume the Soviets were trying the same thing in Romania--whether or not the Romanian regime knew about it. I remarked that the Romanian portion of this paper looked about right the way it was. But [redacted] comment arose in the course of discussion on the Yugoslav portion of the paper, and I said this portion seemed internally inconsistent. That is, the judgment that "Moscow's preferred course of action...appears to be cultivation of a stable Yugoslavia and a stable Yugoslav leadership" did not seem to fit with the paper's (proper) attention to the "active support of the Soviets" for establishing an opposition Communist Party in Yugoslavia. (I pursued this point in a later telephone conversation with Dean, who is working on a much longer paper dealing with the Yugoslav succession problem.)

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5. I also entered a mild plea at the seminar for more attention to the "revisionist" sentiments creeping back into some Soviet journals (e.g., articles by CPSU official F. F. Petrenko). These thoughts, after all, could have interesting reverberations in neighboring countries. The issue being raised by such Soviet writers is Party control--which was one issue raised by the reformers in Prague in 1968. 25X1

6. Near the end of the discussion [redacted] expressed their feeling that it was still proper to stress the "fragility" of existing political and economic arrangements in Eastern Europe, rather than "equilibrium" and "parameters." Aside from what they had read in this paper and heard in the discussion, they argued that it was logical to assume that at least some of the problems now evident in Western Europe must obtain in Eastern Europe also, even if signs are not as visible. In the sharing of problems, not just opportunities, [redacted] implied, the two parts of Europe continue gradually to erase the lines of the Cold War. 25X1

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